

Gender and Religion: A Typology of Female Names in Sudan

Género y Religión: una tipología de nombres femeninos en Sudán

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the impact of Islam on the choice of female names in Sudan through a semantic analytical approach to explore female names associated with Islam from a cultural and religious perspective. The research's motivation stems from the significant role that names play in identity formation and the transmission of cultural and religious values. Despite the extensive body of literature on Islamic naming traditions, little attention has been given to the specific case of Sudan. This study hopes to contribute in showing how Islam affects names in Sudanese society. To achieve this, female names associated with Islam were collected from various Sudanese regions to shed light on their types. As for the methodology, after collecting the names they were categorized under headings to show the Islamic sources from which they were taken. The study relied on the works in the theoretical framework about names in their cultural, social and religious contexts and those explore Islamic and Arabic onomastics. The findings reveal that many Sudanese female names are deeply rooted in Islamic heritage, reflecting moral and spiritual values that parents wish to instill in their children. Some names are intentionally chosen to affirm religious identity, reinforcing the connection between personal identity and the broader Islamic religious framework. This research contributes to the field by highlighting the impact of religion in naming practices. It reflects the importance of raising awareness about the socio-religious significance of names and recommends integrating these discussions into educational curricula. The study calls for initiatives that encourage parents to engage with Islamic heritage in naming their children while also considering the broader cultural and historical dimensions of Sudanese society and to promote a deeper understanding of the cultural and religious significance of names in shaping identity, social belonging, and conveying religious values.

Keywords: Sudan, female names, typology, gender, religious names

Résumen: Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el impacto del islam en la elección de nombres femeninos en Sudán a través de un enfoque de análisis semántico para explorar los nombres femeninos asociados con el islam desde una perspectiva cultural y religiosa. La motivación de la investigación surge del papel significativo que desempeñan los nombres en la formación de la identidad y la transmisión de valores culturales y religiosos. A pesar de la extensa literatura sobre las tradiciones de nombres islámicos, se ha prestado poca atención al caso específico de Sudán. Este estudio espera contribuir a demostrar cómo el islam influye en los nombres dentro de la sociedad sudanesa. Para lograr este objetivo, se recopilaron nombres femeninos asociados con el

islam de diversas regiones de Sudán con el fin de arrojar luz sobre sus tipos. En cuanto a la metodología, después de recopilar los nombres, se clasificaron en categorías para mostrar las fuentes islámicas de las que fueron tomados. El estudio se basó en trabajos del marco teórico sobre los nombres en sus contextos culturales, sociales y religiosos, así como en aquellos que exploran la onomástica islámica y árabe. Los hallazgos revelan que muchos nombres femeninos sudaneses tienen raíces profundas en la herencia islámica, reflejando valores morales y espirituales que los padres desean inculcar en sus hijos. Algunos nombres son elegidos intencionalmente para afirmar la identidad religiosa, reforzando la conexión entre la identidad personal y el marco religioso islámico más amplio. Esta investigación contribuye al campo al destacar el impacto de la religión en las prácticas de denominación. Resalta la importancia de concienciar sobre la relevancia socioreligiosa de los nombres y recomienda integrar estas discusiones en los planes educativos. El estudio hace un llamado a fomentar iniciativas que alienten a los padres a interactuar con la herencia islámica al nombrar a sus hijos, considerando también las dimensiones culturales e históricas más amplias de la sociedad sudanesa. Además, busca promover una comprensión más profunda del significado cultural y religioso de los nombres en la formación de la identidad, el sentido de pertenencia social y la transmisión de valores religiosos.

Palabras clave: Sudán, nombres femeninos, tipología, género, nombres religiosos.

Introduction

Naming people is a universal process, as nations have names that distinguish and identify their individuals. The naming process is as old as history and is rooted in the social, cultural and folkloric characteristics of societies. A child has the right to be honored with a good name that suits them, as choosing a name for a newborn should aim to make the child feel proud of their name, without being a cause for shame or embarrassment. In Sudanese society, whether among Muslims or Christians, names are derived from various sources, and personal names can be classified into two main types: religious names, which are associated with Islam and Christianity, and secular names, which include a wide and unlimited range of names with descriptive, abstract, or environmentally inspired connotations. While this diversity reflects the multiplicity of cultural and religious backgrounds in Sudan, religious influence, particularly Islamic,

is a pivotal dimension in naming practices, with Islamic names becoming entrenched within the social fabric and cultural identity.

A personal name represents an individual, social and formal identity that accompanies its bearer from birth until death and may even leave its mark after death. Therefore, parents have a great responsibility when choosing a name for their new child, as the impact of the name is not limited to its linguistic meaning but extends to become a social and functional characteristic that affects the social and emotional status of its bearer. Within the framework of the Arab and Islamic social and religious organization, Sudanese society shares certain characteristics related to names, with specificities that distinguish each society. Arabic literature indicates that the father has to choose a wife from an honorable family, choose a good name for their child, and teach him to read and write.

Sudanese parents make a great effort to choose appropriate names for their new children, to honor the child, to be proud of themselves, and to ensure the child's social acceptance when he grows up and realizes the meaning of his name. Changing the name after it has been officially registered is difficult in Sudan, as it requires complex legal procedures. The current study explores the social and cultural practices associated with choosing names for female newborns in Sudan; and sheds light on the Islamic religious factors that influence this process, reflecting a deep overlap between cultural, religious, and social identity.

The paper focuses mainly on studying the Islamic influence on Sudanese female names without discussing other influences that may have had an impact on the way names are chosen in Sudan, such as the effects of colonial history, globalization, and linguistic borrowing, which could be studied separately.

Theoretical Framework

This research falls within the field of socionomastics, which studies personal names in their cultural, social and religious contexts. This theory is based on understanding how naming practices are influenced by societal factors and cultural symbols, making it a suitable framework for analyzing the role of Islam in the choice of female names in Sudan. According to this theory, names are not merely identifiers for individuals, but rather tools that reflect societal values and cultural and religious trends that govern society (Hough, 2016).

Socionomastics emphasizes that the choice of names is subject to complex social influences, as names are used as a means of reinforcing identity and belonging to a specific religious or cultural group (Nikolova, 2024). Furthermore, the theory highlights the relationship between naming and societal power, as norms and traditions play a fundamental role in determining culturally and religiously acceptable names (Mensah & Ekpe, 2024; Munyenembe & Simwinga, 2021). From this perspective, the Islamic influence on female names in Sudan can be considered a clear example of the interaction of religion with the social structure.

Historically, the Islamic religion constitutes a major basis in building the cultural and religious identity of the Sudanese, and the influence of religion on names is part of this construction (Mann, 2002). Islamic names in Sudan carry many religious and spiritual symbols, often reflecting religious values, such as loyalty to God and His Messenger and submission to the teachings of Islamic law (Al-Shahi, 1988). Sudanese society is characterized by its religious and cultural diversity, which makes the study of Islamic names a rich and complex subject, requiring an understanding of the

relationship between names and religion and how this influence is reflected in the lives of individuals.

Names in Sudan are closely linked to the concepts of piety and religious respect, as many parents tend to choose religious names for their children, believing that these names provide them with blessings and protection (Boyeldieu, 2019). The names of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions cum followers are common names in Sudanese society. There are also names with religious connotations related to faith and piety, such as the names of prophets and angels (Abu Hatab, 2021). This reflects how personal names are not just identification marks, but rather cultural and religious symbols that carry deep meanings related to individuals' beliefs and spiritual aspirations.

The available literature in the field of onomastics indicates that the choice of names in Islamic societies is closely linked to religious and social orientations. Previous studies have shown that names are a means of expressing religious and ethnic affiliation, and that choosing a religious name may be seen as a means of strengthening one's religious identity and affirming one's connection to Islamic culture (Al-Zumor, 2009). In this context, social norms play an important role in determining appropriate names for females, as some names with a religious or historical character are considered more acceptable in society (Tahat, 2019).

Concerning female names in Sudan, there is a strong influence of the Islamic religion that appears in the choice of names that express virtue and tranquility, such as the names *Fatima*, *Aisha*, and *Khadija*, which are names associated with women from the family of the Prophet Muhammad. These names are considered an embodiment of Islamic values and religious history in the lives of individuals. In addition, the choice

of names in Sudan may be linked to concepts of moral beauty and purity, as names with Islamic connotations are considered a means of strengthening faith and reminding individuals of their religious responsibilities in society (Houissa, 1991). This phenomenon is common in traditional Sudanese societies, where names are carefully chosen to express religious faith.

Islamic naming conventions in Sudan are not limited to names with an explicit religious character, but also extends to names that carry meanings related to Islamic morals, such as *Rahma*, *Maryam*, and *Zainab*. These names are used to emphasize the moral and religious values that individuals are supposed to live by, especially in social and cultural contexts where Islam occupies a high position (Abd-el-Jawad, 1986). In addition to names that carry direct religious references, names that include general religious meanings such as *Nour*, *Huda*, and *Islam* can have a similar effect in deepening the relationship between individuals and religion.

Moreover, other studies highlight the importance of names in strengthening the religious identity of females in Sudan, particularly in conservative populations. The Sudanese society, which is characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, seeks to affirm its Islamic identity by using Islamic names as a tool for social and cultural distinction (Sharma, 1997). This phenomenon is evident in rural and urban societies, where Islamic names are viewed as a source of religious pride and are considered a means of reinforcing values that link the individual to the Islamic faith (Al-Ghazalli, 2010). According to some studies, the choice of religious names plays a vital role in shaping the individual's image in society, as people with religious names are viewed as closer to Islamic values and more committed to the teachings of the religion (Notzon & Nesom, 2005).

Based on the above, the role of Islam in naming practices in Sudan is a complex and rich phenomenon in which religious, social and cultural values are intertwined and form part of the religious and cultural identity of the individual and society. The choice of names in this context reflects a great interest in representing Islamic values in daily life, and is considered a means of highlighting religious and spiritual belonging, by linking individuals to their religious heritage.

Data Collection and Methodology

This research relied on the descriptive analytical approach, where the descriptive approach identifies the phenomenon and explains its characteristics without a deep explanation of the causes, while the analytical approach contributes to examining the names, their meanings, and the reasons for choosing them in Sudanese society. This approach is suitable for studying naming traditions because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of common name patterns, with the possibility of analyzing the cultural and religious dimensions behind their use. It also enables the researcher to document the phenomenon objectively, while providing a careful analysis of the factors that influence the choice of names in the Sudanese context.

The focus was on names inspired by the *Holy Quran*, religious figures such as the female companions and wives of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as names associated with Islamic concepts such as “Iman”, “Noor”, and “Rahma”.

Names with religious origins were collected from several main sources. This began with the *Holy Quran*, where names inspired by Quranic verses and religious events were extracted, as well as names mentioned in the Prophet’s biography related to female companions and other Islamic figures. Two hundred female names were collected from multiple sources, including family records, field research through

interviews with Sudanese families, and opinion polls that aimed to identify common and uncommon names in society. These names were classified based on their religious and social connotations into several categories, including female names of the Prophet Muhammad's daughters, such as Ruqayyah and Fatima, and names of female companions and wives of the Prophet that reflect a strong connection to Islamic heritage. The list also included names with religious and moral meanings from the Holy Quran, such as Iman, Rahma, Nour, Huda, and Taqwa, in addition to names inspired by Paradise, such as Tasneem, Kawthar, and Dania.

Islamic books and references specializing in genealogy and the history of the Companions were also used, in addition to electronic sources that provide lists and meanings of religious names. The process of collecting names was comprehensive and systematic. Initial documentation began with a review of Quranic and Hadith texts. Then, names were collected through interviews with Sudanese families in urban and rural areas. Subsequently, they were classified according to religious heritage into main categories, including names inspired by the *Holy Quran*, religious figures such as female companions and wives of the Prophet, and holy places such as *Mecca* and *Medina*, in addition to names that reflect the qualities of faith. The names were systematically classified based on their origins and religious meanings. For example, names inspired by the *Holy Quran* such as *Aya* and *Sundus* were included, as were names inspired by the biography of the Prophet such as *Khadija* and *Aisha*. Names related to holy places such as *Mecca* and *Medina* were also included, as well as names that reflect faith values such as *Rahma* and *Huda*.

Research ethics were also considered throughout the stages of the study. It was ensured that privacy was respected and the confidentiality of the information collected

through field interviews with Sudanese families was maintained. Informed consent was also obtained from the participants before starting any data collection process, with clarification of the research's purpose and the information's use. In addition, the data was handled accurately and objectively, ensuring that there was no manipulation or bias in the analysis and classification of names. Intellectual property rights were also respected when using literary and religious sources, with clear reference to each source relied upon. By adhering to these ethical principles, this research seeks to provide reliable results that accurately and fairly reflect the social and religious reality. Ultimately, the research is expected to enhance the cultural and religious understanding of the role of names in building religious identity in Sudanese society. It will also help document the relationship between names and religious heritage, which will contribute to spreading awareness among future generations about the importance of names of religious origin in Sudanese culture.

Results

The word "Asmaa" appears in many verses of the *Holy Quran*, where its first appearance is mentioned in the Almighty's saying: "And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, inform Me of the names of these, if you should be truthful". (Al-Baqarah: 36). This verse refers to the importance of names in man's understanding of the world around him, as Adam was given knowledge of all the names to be the beginning of man's interaction with God's creations. In Sudan, Islamic religious naming traditions of females are noticeably widespread, due to Islam being the dominant religion among the majority of the population. This, therefore, greatly influences the choice of names for children, whether male or female. In Sudanese society, referring to the *Holy Quran* is one of the most

prominent means of choosing names for newborn Muslim girls, as names inspired by the *Holy Quran* are seen as a sign of purity, blessing, and deep religious connection.

Islamic religious naming traditions of females in Sudan are represented in a group of patterns that reflect religious and cultural values, and they are of different variations that carry spiritual or historical meanings. Concerning the names derived from the beautiful attributes of Allah, it is noted that these ninety-nine attributes are most often used with the prefix *Abd* to be part of personal names for males, such as *Abdullah* or *Abd al-Rahman*, which are names with a deeply religious character. The prefix "Ummah" is not used with these attributes to be personal names for females. This phenomenon shows how the choices of names in Sudan are not just a linguistic process, but rather a mixture of religious and social culture that dictates to the Sudanese family to choose names that have deep meanings and are consistent with the prevailing religious values and beliefs in society.

Titles of Suras (Chapters of *The Holy Quran*)

The Holy Quran contains 114 Surahs and each Surah has a title that reflects its content or is related to a specific event or topic. These Quranic titles vary greatly. They include the names of prophets, times, animals, letters, natural phenomena, places, creatures, and events of the Day of Judgment, as well as other topics that carry deep connotations and spiritual and religious meanings. The titles are more than just names; they serve as profound symbols. Thus they extend beyond linguistic definitions, encapsulating spiritual and religious meanings that enrich the Holy Quran's message with diverse facets of life.

In many Arab and Islamic countries, including Sudan, some Muslims use these titles for the Quranic Surahs to name their newborn children, especially girls. This tradition is considered a way to give a kind of sanctity and religious character to the

child, as her name is associated with concepts with deep religious and historical dimensions. This use shows the community's connection to the religious concepts that are abundant in the Quranic Surahs such that the names contribute to strengthening the Islamic identity of the bearers and linking them to the rich religious heritage of the Muslim community lives.

Examples would include *Anfal* (The Spoils of War,8), *Baraa'* (The Repentance, 9), *Israa'* (The Night Journey,17), *Maryam* (Mary,19), *Saba'* (Sheba,34), *Naba'* (The Tidings,78), *Burooj* (The Mansions of the Stars,85), *Fajir* (The Dawn,89), *Dhuha* (The Morning Hours,93), *Kawthar* (The Abundance,108), and *Ikhlas* (The Sincerity114).

Names from Heaven (Paradise)

The attributes that describe Paradise and the reward of Allah for his people in the *Holy Quran* are many and varied greatly, reflecting the greatness of this reward and the divine rewards that will be the share of the sincere believers. These rewards vary between spiritual and material blessings and the most prominent of these blessings are the springs and rivers from which the believers will drink in Paradise, which is a particular bliss unlike any other. Among the names mentioned in the Holy Quran that refer to these blessed springs are *Al-Kawthar*, *Tasneem*, and *Salsabeel*, which are distinct springs from which the believers will drink, and each name indicates a special type of bliss and pleasure that the people of Paradise will feel.

In addition, the *Holy Quran* refers to the gardens that will be shared by the believers in Paradise because these gardens are known by their names that pulsate with beauty and bliss. Among the names given to these blessed gardens are *Jannah*, *Janan*, *Adan*, *Firdaws*, *Maw'a*, and *Muntaha*. All of these names are associated with beauty, spaciousness, and eternal bliss, and represent unparalleled reassurance and joy in the afterlife, where believers will live in these eternal gardens that know no misery.

Conversely, it is observed that some of these names associated with the Paradise of Bliss are utilized in many Islamic cultures, such as Sudan. In these societies, parents, particularly when naming daughters, often select names inspired by this concept of paradise. This choice symbolizes optimism about eternal bliss and the high status that will be granted to the faithful person in the afterlife. For example, names such as *Sundus* and *Istabraq* are chosen, which are names that refer to the fine clothes that the people of Paradise will wear, reflecting pride and pride in Paradise and its indescribable bliss.

Contextually, these names are part of the cultural and religious heritage that connects the Muslim to God and the afterlife because they carry deep spiritual and religious meanings. Therefore, choosing such names is an expression of religious appreciation and hope that the bearer of the name will receive a good reward in the afterlife, in addition to its connection to the eternal bliss that God has promised to His believing servants.

Names Derived from Quranic Related Words and Expressions

In Sudan, many Quranic words are used as personal names for females, reflecting a deep appreciation for the *Holy Quran* and the spiritual and religious meanings contained in its verses. Some of these names are directly derived from Quranic words and phrases that carry great connotations, while others are derived indirectly. However, they all carry noble and sublime meanings. The use of Quranic names is not limited to being names only, but also represents a deep religious symbolism that refers to the concepts of faith, piety and blessing. One of the names that are frequently used in Sudanese society and have their origins in the Holy Quran is *Iman*, which denotes a strong belief in God and His teachings as well as adherence to Islamic values. Likewise, *Nour* is a name that expresses the divine light that illuminates the hearts of believers and guides them in life. As for *Saja*, which means calmness and

serenity, it is also used as a name that reflects the spiritual reassurance that believers possess. There is also the name *Dania*, which is mentioned in the *Holy Quran* to mean closeness to God, in addition to *Afnan* which refers to branches or flowers, symbolizing beauty and spiritual growth.

Similarly, *Aya* and *Ayat* are additional names with profound Quranic connotations that allude to supernatural wonders seen in the Quran. Meanwhile, “Bayan” reflects clarity and correct interpretation. Also, the name "Huda" also comes from the *Holy Quran* to mean guidance to the path of truth, while *Tuqa* and *Taqwa* express piety and devotion, which are essential Islamic values. There are also many names that carry important religious and spiritual meanings, such as *Huda*, which refers to guidance and direction, and *Duaa*, which symbolizes supplication and turning to God Almighty. The name *Bushra* carries within it the good news of goodness and joy, while *Najwa* refers to secret conversations and supplication in prayer. *Lina* reflects tenderness and kindness, and *Raghad* expresses luxury and a comfortable life.

As for *Rahma*, it is one of the attributes mentioned in the *Holy Quran* and expresses the divine mercy that includes all of God's creation, and *Watin* is a name that expresses the heart or life, and is linked to the spiritual essence of man. *Ilaaf* refers to familiarity and love between people, and *Islam* is the name that expresses belonging to the religion of Islam. However, the root “salam” denotes peace. Names such as *Malak* and *Jihad* are also used, where the first refers to purity and cleanliness, while the second expresses the struggle for the sake of God. As for *Abrar*, it denotes benevolence and righteousness, and *Tawhid* is linked to the monotheism of God, which is the basis of the Islamic faith. Finally, *Ghufran* is a name that expresses the divine forgiveness that God grants to His servants who repent from their sins. There are also names such as

Tabarak which refers to blessing and goodness, as well as *Tarteel* which refers to the recitation and chanting of the *Holy Quran*.

These Quranic names in Sudanese society show a close connection to Islamic values, as their meanings reflect the spiritual and religious aspects that people care about in their daily lives. Choosing these names is not only an expression of religious appreciation, but also a way to connect the individual with Islamic concepts that enhance religious identity and strengthen the sense of belonging to the Muslim community.

Female Companions, Daughters, and Wives of the Prophet Mohammad

In Sudan, the names of Islamic and Arab figures are considered the main sources for naming girls. This reflects the Sudanese society's deep connection to religious and Islamic heritage. This trend is not limited to choosing names from Arabic dictionaries but also reflects pride and respect for prominent Islamic figures who played a major role in Islamic history. These names derive their meanings from religious models characterized by strength, purity, and courage, which makes them carefully chosen by Sudanese families.

Among the most prominent of these names are the names of the Mothers of the Believers, i.e. the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, who played a pivotal role in the path of Islam. At the top of these names is the name *Khadija*, who was the first wife of the Prophet and the mother of his children. The name *Aisha*, another wife of the Prophet, is also chosen and is one of the famous names in Islamic history due to her great position in science and history. The names of his other wives are also *Hafsa*, *Maria*, *Umm Salama*, *Safiya*, *Juwayriya* and *Maymouna*.

The names of the Prophet's daughters are also among the favorite names in Sudanese society. "Fatima", the Prophet's daughter, is considered one of the greatest figures in the history of Islam. *Zainab*, *Ruqayyah* and *Umm Kulthum* are also among the Prophet's daughters whose names are used in Sudan. The names taken from Islamic figures were not limited to the Prophet's wives and daughters only, but also included the Prophet's female companions. Among these names are *Asma*, *Umamah*, *Sumaya*, *Khawla*, *Nusaybah* and *Arwa*.

In addition, many Sudanese are keen to choose names from other historical Islamic figures, such as *Halima*, the Prophet's wet nurse, and *Amina*, the mother of the Prophet Muhammad. In general, the choice of these names in Sudan shows the extent of the Islamic community's attachment to the traditions of the ancestors and the interest in religious symbols that had a great impact on the lives of Muslims.

Names of Islamic Geographical Places and Sacred Sites

In Sudan, naming newborn girls with names derived from Islamic religious sites and geographical locations is a significant aspect of community culture and Islamic customs. These names carry deep religious meanings, and involve symbolism linked to Islamic history and holy places that are of special importance to Muslims around the world. The most prominent of these sites are the places associated with Mecca and Medina, which are the two holy cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and are considered among the most prominent destinations associated with Muslims in their worship and spiritual works.

Mecca is a major destination for Muslims every year, as Muslims flock from all over the world to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage in the month of *Dhul-Hijjah*, which is the last month of the Islamic calendar. Mecca is considered a very sacred place, as it embraces the Kaaba, which is the direction Muslims face in their daily prayers. In

addition to *Hajj*, Muslims also head to Mecca throughout the year to perform *Umrah*, a similar act of worship to Hajj but which can be performed at any time of the year.

In Medina, Muslims visit the Prophet's Mosque, where the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad is located. Visiting his tomb is a recommended act that carries a great reward in the Islamic religion. Although these places carry deep religious sanctity, they are rooted in the minds thanks to the constant visits of believers to them, and are engraved in the memory as part of the spiritual experience that a Muslim lives.

As for the names of religious places that are used as female personal names in Sudan, we find that some names associated with sites that witnessed important events in the *Hajj* and *Umrah* rituals gain special importance. The most prominent of these names are *Safa*, *Marwa* and *Zamzam*, which are places and water sources closely related to the performance of the Hajj rituals. *Safa* and *Marwa* are two mountains that are central to *alsa'i* which is one of the key rituals of Hajj, where pilgrims perform the act of walking between them. As for *Zamzam*, it is a holy water well located near the Kaaba that burst forth by the command of God during the time of the Prophet Abraham when he left his wife *Hajar* and his son Ishmael in Mecca, and water came out for her. These names represent excessive sanctity, and many Muslims in Sudan are keen to use them to name their daughters, which adds a religious and spiritual dimension to the names that reflects their close connection to the Islamic faith and its holy places.

In addition to these names associated with religious places, we find that geographical names of regions and cities with a long Islamic history are also used to name girls in Sudan. For example, the names of cities such as *Mecca* and *Tayyiba* (another name for Medina) are used to name girls. Mecca, as it should be recalled, is the location of the Kaaba, which is the holiest place in Islam. Alternatively, *Tayyiba*, is one of the famous titles for Medina, and it is an important center for the Islamic religion

after Mecca, as it contains the Prophet's Mosque, which is considered the second holiest place for Muslims after the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

The use of these names reflects the depth of the relationship between the Sudanese and their Islamic faith, and their great interest in linking their names and the names of their children to places that carry strong religious symbolism in Islam. Through these practices, we find that the names used in Sudan carry a spiritual and cultural dimension at the same time.

Discussion

The study of names inspired by Islamic religious sources revealed that the names transcend mere labels. They carry profound spiritual and religious connotations that significantly influence the individuals who bear them. Whether these names are taken from the *Holy Quran* or the holy places in Islam, they shape personal identity and affirm religious affiliation. In this context, this section discusses how these names are used in Sudanese society, highlighting their cultural, social and religious impact.

It can be noted that choosing names in Sudan is one of the practices that carry multiple messages, in which the religious aspect overlaps with the social and cultural aspect. In Sudan, where Muslims constitute the vast majority of the population, parents are keen to choose names for their children that have a religious character that reflects belonging to Islamic culture, and this choice is considered a means of expressing appreciation and reverence for religion and its teachings. Hence, names inspired by the *Holy Quran* and the Prophet's *Hadith*, whether they are the names of prophets, female companions, or holy places, emerge as one of the preferred choices for Sudanese families.

The concept of “name” in Sudanese culture is not only related to an individual's personal identity, but it is also part of a cultural and religious legacy that is meant to

remain engraved in the collective memory. For example, we discovered that names such as *Mecca* and *Medina* are considered an expression of high spirituality, and refer to the religious values that the Sudanese family cherishes. These names are not limited to being geographical indications only, but also carry a symbolic faith associated with the rituals of *Hajj* and *Umrah*, which are considered among the most sublime acts that a Muslim can perform throughout his life.

Moreover, many given names carry meanings related to the qualities of faith, such as names that indicate piety, faith, guidance, and other qualities that are reinforced by the *Holy Quran*. For example, we discovered that names such as *Iman*, *Taqwa*, *Huda*, and *Sujood* are among the names that Sudanese families choose for their daughters. These names do not only represent commendable personal traits, but they are also an invitation for the child to live according to these sublime values.

In addition, we found that names inspired by the bliss of heaven constitute a large part of the names used in Sudan. Names such as *Al-Kawthar*, *Tasneem*, and *Sundus* represent spiritual realms mentioned in the Holy Quran, and express the ideal life that Muslims hope to achieve in heaven. These names are not just expressions of hope for the afterlife but also represent beautiful images of the life that Muslims hope to live in obedience to God and that these virtues are reflected in their daily lives.

The uses of names in Sudan are not limited to religious aspects only, but also carry a social and cultural value. When a child is given a religious name, this naming is a declaration of the family's religious orientation and interest in raising the child on Islamic values. This choice is usually linked to the parents' hopes of having children who are able to carry the message of religion and pass it on to future generations. Names are also considered factors that contribute to shaping the child's personality and directing him towards the values that the family and society adhere to.

The increasing use of names inspired by the *Holy Quran* and the Hadith in Sudan also reflects the influence of the Islamic culture prevalent in most Arab and Islamic countries. In Sudan, these names are also joined by the names of religious sites, such as *Mecca*, *Safa*, *Marwa*, *Zamzam*, and *Tayyiba*, which carry strong connotations related to *Hajj*, *Umrah*, and visiting holy places. These names express the desire of parents to connect their children to the holiest places in Islam, as well as to encourage them to emulate the sublime models that these places represent in the history of Islam.

An analysis of personal names in Sudan revealed that these names are not just passing names, but rather evidence of the religious and cultural identity of society. Examining names inspired by Islamic religious sources in Sudanese society revealed a dynamic interplay between local culture and religion. These names not only serve as identifiers but also play a crucial role in reinforcing religious and social values. Furthermore, the choice of such names reflects a continuation of rich religious and cultural heritage, contributing to the preservation of spirituality and a profound connection to Islamic concepts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that choosing names in Sudanese society is not just a simple social or cultural process, but rather an expression of a deep religious and cultural identity that embodies the relationship between individuals and their religion, as well as their connection to their history and heritage. The names chosen for children are not random, but are often linked to Islamic religious concepts. In this sense, names become more than just tools to distinguish between people, but also represent direct references to the qualities that parents hope their children will possess, whether in terms of faith, morals, or the desire to obtain a high status in this life and the hereafter.

Names inspired by Islamic sources are among the most prominent tools used by Sudanese families to name their daughters, reflecting the profound influence that the teachings of Islam have left on the culture of Sudanese society. Names inspired by holy places, such as *Mecca*, *Medina*, and *Safa*, go beyond being mere geographical names, to become spiritual and religious symbols that aim to connect the child to the sublime Islamic concepts related to *Hajj*, purity, and obedience.

The use of names that carry religious and spiritual connotations in naming children is part of a broader project that aims to instill these values in the souls of children. Each name chosen carries within it intertwined messages of hope and ambition. Simultaneously, the choice of names inspired by the holy sites in Islam, such as *Mecca*, *Safa*, and *Zamzam*, shows the interest of Sudanese families in their spiritual and historical heritage. These names reflect an appreciation for the places that represent the pinnacle of Islamic spirituality and are considered a constant source of inspiration for believers. By bestowing upon their children names inspired by holy places, parents express their heartfelt desire that their offspring may be blessed with the grace and sanctity associated with those revered sites.

On the other hand, the value of names related to natural phenomena and spiritual virtues such as *Iman*, *Huda*, and *Rahma*, is highlighted in promoting a sense of inner peace and tranquility. These names carry deep meanings that translate into the reality of the child's life, as they constitute an implicit call to live according to the principles represented by these titles, such as striving to achieve a life full of piety, optimism, and giving. In this context, names are considered a cultural and educational tool that contributes to shaping individual and collective identity.

In light of this, we discovered that names in Sudan are not just an expression of self or individual distinction, but rather a social and cultural contract that enhances

religious cohesion and enshrines Islamic values. They represent an important element in building national and religious identity, and contribute to shaping the collective consciousness of society. Ultimately, names remain a wonderful way to express hope for the future, and to convey spiritual and cultural messages. Through these names, the importance of preserving religious and cultural identity becomes apparent.

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